

REMARKS

Non-elected claims 1 - 16 and 24 - 50 have been canceled in a prior amendment without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of these claims in continuing and/or divisional applications.

Claims 17 - 23 and 51 - 62 are present in the subject application.

In the Office Action dated May 4, 2006, the Examiner has rejected claims 17, 18, 19, 23, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 59 and 62 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,293,868 (Gonzalez) as modified by U.S. Patent No. 4,532,414 (Shah et al.) and U.S. Patent No. 6,464,666 (Augustine et al.), has rejected claims 20, 54 and 60 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of the Gonzalez and Shah et al. patents and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0009610 (Augustine et al.), and has rejected claims 21, 22, 55 and 61 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of the Augustine et al. publication and the Gonzalez, Shah et al. and Augustine et al. patents, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,245,693 (Ford et al.). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the subject application based on the following remarks.

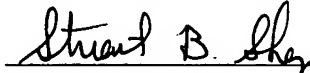
Initially, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the courtesies extended by Examiner Witczak during the telephone Interview of September 7, 2006. The Interview included discussions of the Gonzalez patent in view of the independent claims. Applicants indicated that the Gonzalez patent had been presented earlier in the prosecution of the subject application and is deficient for the reasons already specified during prosecution. The Examiner conceded that the Gonzalez patent was deficient, but raised concerns about other art previously utilized during prosecution, namely U.S. Patent Application Publication No.

2002/0156451 (Lenker) and U.S. Patent No. 4,747,450 (Ikegame et al.). Applicants indicated that the currently outstanding rejections do not utilize those documents, and asserted that these documents were similarly deficient for the reasons already specified during prosecution.

Since the Examiner conceded the deficiency of the Gonzalez patent and since each rejection within the Office Action is based on that patent, the currently outstanding rejections cannot stand. Accordingly, claims 17 - 23 and 51 - 62 are considered to be in condition for allowance.

The application, having been shown to overcome issues raised in the Office Action, is considered to be in condition for allowance and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


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Hand Delivered: 9/29/06